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ABSTRACT

In response to campus crime schools across the United States have instituted rigorous dress codes, and, in some cases, have required students to wear uniforms to school. The president of the local school board has received petitions from several groups wishing to speak at the next school board meeting. The president's political survival rests upon the direction they lead. This activity for students in grade 12 lists three groups in favor of school uniforms (administrators, teachers, and parents) and three groups against school uniforms (American Civil Liberties Union, students, and parents). The student's job is to assume a role in a group and research a position on the issue of uniforms and dress codes for presentation to the school board. One group should take on the role of school board and research issues related to school safety and uniforms so that an informed opinion can be made. Each group is required to submit a written proposal and make a 10-minute presentation to the board using written, oral, and/or a computer presentation program such as Microsoft PowerPoint. The activity sets out the task; delineates the process; lists resources; offers learning advice; discusses evaluation; and suggests conclusion questions. The teacher notes section identifies appropriate units; explains the lesson purpose; and addresses California state standards for language arts and history/social sciences. It also addresses adaptations for special needs students. (BT)

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Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World

Know the Code

Twelve Grade - Principles of American Democracy Lesson by David R. MacDonald

SO 034 279

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Know the Code

As crime has risen amongst teens, the familiar cry has gone out that this generation is worse than the one before, and unless something is done about it we are doomed as a society. In response to campus crime and the threat of gangs, schools across the country have instituted rigorous dress codes and in some cases, have required students to wear a uniform to school. As the president of your local school board, you are keenly aware of the controversy surrounding school dress codes and have asked that before you and your members render a decision in your district, each affected group present its position. You have received petitions from these groups wishing a time to speak at the next school board meeting.

Groups in Favor of School Uniforms	**Groups against School Uniforms**
Teachers	ACLU
School administration officials	PSST! (Parents Should Shop, Thanks!!)
SCORED (Schools Can Organize Reasonable Expectations for Dress) A parent group in favor of uniforms/dress codes	Students

You have the choice to decide among a number of options, or make no choice at all. There has been a slight increase in on-campus crime at your schools so the pressure on you is to do the right thing,

whatever that might be. With the next elections coming up, your political survival will rest on the direction you lead.

The Task

Your job is to assume a role in one of the above described groups and research a position on the issue of uniforms and dress codes for your presentation to the school board. One group should also take on the role of School Board and research all issues related school safety and uniforms so that an informed opinion can be made. Each group is required to submit a written proposal and make a ten minute presentation to the Board using written, oral and/or a computer presentation program such as PowerPoint. The school board has promised an open and fair hearing with equal representation from all sides concerned. Feel free to express the position of your assigned group.

The Process

Each group should devise a system so that each member of the team has a role to accomplish. With regards to your presentation. It has been recommended that you utilize a multimedia approach, as the combination of words and pictures can be a moving experience. As with many issues, this can and probably will be an emotional one with each side arguing their feelings as well as facts. However, a presentation that is weighted too heavily with feelings will not not stand the test of time and so will be less persuasive in the long run.

Resources

Plan on utilizing as many of these sources as possible from the Internet so as to bolster your case.

Litigating School Dress Codes
http://www.teachermag.com/ew/vol-16/25fossey.h16

School Uniforms: ACLU Point of View
http://www.aclu.org/congress/uniform.html

http://www.aclu.org/news/w021398a.html

Dress Codes in Schools

http://bvsd.k12.co.us/cent/Newspaper/sep95/dress_AO.html

Student Rights and Dress Codes

www.tentler.com/dress.htm

Learning Advice

Since this is a highly charged, controversial issue, it is up to you and your team to end the controversy in a positive way. Your position should be based on as much fact-based information as possible, allowing the truth of what you speak to come through. As you are already aware, the learning environment in today s schools is already cluttered, it is up to you to bring clarity to this issue. The best way to do this is to anticipate the needs and the ideas of the opposition groups. In your argument, include ways to meet the needs of those groups using your position on the dress code.

Evaluation

You will be evaluated based on the clarity and soundness of your presentation. Your team's work will be reviewed as to the details and facts presented directly connected to your argument. Both a written and oral presentation are required and extra points will be awarded on how your proposal is delivered and whether or not it is chosen as the direction the school board will follow.

Conclusion

The issue of school dress codes/uniforms and their effects on learning and school safety will continue to be debated as long as school doors remain open. There has been very little middle ground reached in past discussions. As your work here comes to an end, reflect on these questions and prepare a written answer for each.

1. As a student, do you feel that a regulated dress code/uniform policy would help students to learn more and provide a safer learning environment?

2. Is it the school's responsibility to enforce what was once a parental decision?

3. What should the school's role be regarding student dress?

Teacher Notes

Grade12

Units: Democratic Process, Constitutional Issues, Local Government

Lesson Purpose- To engage students in the decision making process so as to

encourage them to become active citizens upon graduation from high school.

Standards:

Langauge Arts 11/12

Reading Comprehension: Students read and understand grade level apporpriate material. They analyze the organizational patters, arguments, and positions advanced.

Writing Strategies: Students write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument.

Listening and Speaking: Students formulate adroit judgments about oral communication. They deliver focused and coherent presentations of their own that convey clear and distinct perspectives and solid reasoning.

History-Social Science 12:

12.5 Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the U.S. Constitution and its amendments in terms of the changing interpretations of the Bill of Rights over time. 12.6 Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national state and local elective office in terms of the means that citizens

use to participate in the political process. 12.7.6 Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of ....local governments and the process of lawmaking at each ...level including the role of lobbying and media.

Adaptations for Special Needs Students

Depending on your class size, you may speed up, slow down, add to or eliminate parts of the lesson to suit your classes needs and abilities.

For the Teacher- Depending on your school s policies regarding dress codes/uniforms, you may want to use this lesson as way of informing the students the reasons behind a decision such as this and the steps that are taken by schools to combat outside influences that take away from the learning process. This lesson could also be used as test case by a school, that is currently pondering a change in dress policy where the students can take an active role in gathering the data and then as a concluding activity, share their results with the school board and school administrators. Since this is a potentially divisive issue, this lesson could help to diffuse tensions amongst students and administrators and actually help them to work together.

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